

## TOWN OF NEWINGTON

### TOWN HALL RENOVATIONS PROJECT BUILDING COMMITTEE

December 15, 2014

Town Hall – Lower Level Conference Room L-101

#### SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

- I. Call to Order – The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by Chairperson Bongiovanni.
- II. Roll Call – Members present: Alan Bongiovanni, Chairperson; Jim Marocchini; Sarah Jorgensen; Rodney Mortensen, Jane Murphy and Whit Przech. Others present: Members of the public; Dave Langdon, Director of Facilities Management; Chuck Boos and David King, Kaestle Boos Associates; and Jeff Baron, Director of Administrative Services.
- III. Public Participation – Rose Lyons, 46 Elton Drive. The Committee members' names are on the website. The agenda for tonight's meeting was not on the meeting schedule of all meetings on the Town's website.  
  
John Slusarski, 40 Grandview Drive. He was encouraged by the Committee's questions at the last meeting. He has been frustrated in the past with departments receiving their wants as opposed to their needs. He feels the previous space needs were crazy. He encourages the Committee to consider that when considering the choice for an architect.  
  
Mady Kenny, 53 Crestview Drive. It would be helpful if the Committee would plan its meetings on a set schedule.
- IV. Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes – Ms. Jorgensen stated that both she and Mr. Nagel had stated more than once at the previous meeting that the land adjacent to the library had been purchased by, and was owned and controlled by, the library foundation and that she would like to see that included in the minutes of the previous meeting. Ms. Murphy made a motion to approve the minutes of the December 2, 2014 meeting as amended. A second to the motion was made by Mr. Przech. The motion passed by a vote of 6 YES to 0 NO.
- V. Discuss and Take Action on Project Architect – The Chair opened the discussion. Kaestle Boos Associates is currently the project architect. They have offered to continue to work with the Committee on this project without

an additional charge. It would take several months to go through a Request for Proposals (RFP) process and the Town would have to spend more money in fees. Kaestle Boos Associates has the people, talent and expertise that the Committee needs. He is favor of keeping them on. There are many reasons why the first project failed. The Committee will look to have an updated needs assessment. If the Committee is not happy with what it sees or receives, it can make a change. Mr. Bongiovanni wants the citizens to know that the Committee is getting as creative a project as it can.

Ms. Jorgensen reminded the Committee that the public had a strong feeling about looking at other firms. The space needs and other prior studies were not included in the pre-referendum fees charged by Kaestle Boos Associates. Mr. Bongiovanni responded that this Building Committee had building project expertise and experience that the previous Project Building Committee did not have. He expects that the charge they will give the architect will provide them with better direction. Mr. Marocchini felt that the timeline and Kaestle Boos' most recent offer made this decision a "no-brainer" for him. Kaestle Boos Associates would also be legs ahead of other firms if the Committee did decide to go out to RFP. The Committee needs to provide the new ideas. He is favor of keeping Kaestle Boos Associates. Ms. Murphy believes that Kaestle Boos has history with the building. The Project Building Committee is the fresh perspective. The Committee needs to give the architect the plan of what the Committee wants. There is a lot more participation and public voices than last time. She did not feel it was worth \$100,000 for another perspective.

Mr. Przech stated he was also in favor of keeping Kaestle Boos Associates as the Project Architect. The Committee needs to give them specific orders and instruct them to focus on this site. They need to look the space assessment over again. He also would like a thorough testing for hazardous materials. The Chair directed staff to provide reports on hazardous materials at the Town Hall for the next meeting. Mr. Langdon stated that he has been underneath the building and roughly 85% of the hazardous materials there have been removed. He anticipates that there is also asbestos in the wall cavities. He has looked at the hazardous materials reports and they are right on. The costs are from a few years ago, so those figures would be higher now. Now you also have PCBs. Otherwise the report is dead on. The lowest quote he received to perform a new study was \$39,000. He did not feel that a new study could justify that expense.

Ms. Jorgensen asked if the structural engineer would be a separate entity. Mr. Langdon responded that he would be working with Kaestle Boos Associates' engineer. He has looked at the columns underneath the building. Ms. Jorgensen stated that the roof has issues, as does the wall in the gym. She would like a structural report. The south wall started bowing in the past two years. Is the wall savable? What about the crack under the floor? Mr. Mortensen stated that this Committee was starting fresh. The previous

Committee did what they thought was best. Kaestle Boos Associates may have gotten a bad reputation based on what they were asked to design. The atrium issue took on a life of its own. He felt that Kaestle Boos Associates does good work and that the Committee should stay with them. The plan might be substantially different or slightly different. The Committee should not throw out the baby with the bath water. The Committee needs to get going and fast, given the condition of the building. The Committee is still some time away from having a plan and a referendum. The project will be different from what it was before. He encouraged the Committee to channel its efforts into the direction to give to the architect. The Town would have to spend a lot more to get someone else up to speed. The Committee wants everyone to agree on the end product.

Mr. Marocchini made a motion that the Committee keep Kaestle Boos Associates as the Project Architect for the Town Hall Renovations Project. A second to the motion was made by Mr. Mortensen. Discussion: Mr. Przech asked if the motion should be amended to refer to keeping the project at the current Town Hall site. It was agreed that the site for the project should be part of any direction given to the architect after one had been selected and should not be part of this motion. The motion passed by a vote of 6 YES to 0 NO.

- VI. Any Other Business Pertinent to the Committee – The Chair directed Kaestle Boos to work on a needs assessment over the next few months and to start developing a list of ideas for the Committee to consider. The Committee will be meeting again on January 6<sup>th</sup> and will start talking about parameters for the project at that time. The Building Committee will not be able to please everyone but will do the best it can to develop a reasonable project at the best cost. Ms. Jorgensen asked if the Committee would start with the structural engineer. Mr. Marocchini felt that would come after the conceptual design. Ms Jorgensen asked, if the Committee is choosing to stay on this site with a gym that has issues, can the gym be salvaged? Mr. Boos responded that his firm has an engineer in house who is a forensic engineer. He can elaborate on his earlier examinations and make the results clearer. He thanked the Committee for staying with his firm. Kaestle Boos Associates have an open mind and want to work closely with all interested parties. He will present any reports to Mr. Langdon.

Mr. Mortensen felt the Committee should develop a rough idea of the steps it wanted take. Mr. Baron notified the Committee that, although it had invited the Library Board to its January 6<sup>th</sup> meeting, the Board was scheduled to meet with the Town Council on January 13<sup>th</sup> and suggested the Committee may wish to attend that meeting instead. The Chair asked Mr. King on the timing to revisit the space needs analysis with departments. Mr. King responded that it was close to Christmas and New Years. He would meet with the department heads early in the new year and find out what may or may not have changed.

He will incorporate any parameters from the Building Committee. His firm will also conduct more forensic examination, if necessary. Mr. Boos stated they would develop their ideas into a graphic solution. The Chair stated his intent to start discussing the needs analysis in February. Ms. Jorgensen also felt the Committee needed to be concerned about the money it is spending. The Chair felt that the Committee needed some direction from the Town Council regarding the dollars anticipated for the project.

Mr. Langdon requested direction as to what the Committee was looking for regarding the space needs study, given that it had been re-visited not that long ago. Mr. Bongiovanni felt the earlier numbers needed verification, and what was good should be retained. Ms. Murphy felt the Committee needed to know what Parks and Recreation needed. Mr. Przech felt that it was time to distinguish between what is “necessary” and what is “nice to have” space. Mr. Mortensen pointed out that because it was anticipated that Parks and Recreation wouldn’t be in this building, departments may have had that in mind when they made their requests. He felt the architect needed to go back and talk to Parks and Recreation, to find out what they need.

As the Library Board is meeting with the Town council on January 13<sup>th</sup>, Mr. Baron will rescind the Committee’s invitation to the Library Board to meet with the Committee on January 6<sup>th</sup>. The Committee will meet with the Library Board at a later date if it is appropriate to do so. The Chair will attempt to ascertain if the Committee will receive permission to plan on developing parking on the library’s land; if the Committee can conceptually plan on using their land. The Committee will still meet on January 6<sup>th</sup> and will discuss ideas on the Town Hall. It will wait until Mr. Nagel is present before attempting to set any sort of a schedule.

- VII. Public Participation – John Slusarski, 40 Grandview Drive. He has a copy of the last space needs study. He doesn’t think it will change that much. The space for the Board of Education went up, as did Parks and Recreation. They should be asked to justify why they need so much more. He struggles with the Board of Education needing more space.

Mady Kenny, 52 Crestview Drive. She is one of the public who asked the Town Council if other architects would be considered and was told others would be. She is disappointed. Why was the company present when they were being discussed? It looked like the Building Committee had made up their mind before hand. Parks and Recreation should be given a directive to give a hard look at what they are asking for. Department heads should come before the Committee, not go through the architect, and should justify their needs. When papers are handed out, she requests that they be given to the public. The public has observational things they can offer.... The Chairman stated earlier that he could change the Committee members or the architect if things didn’t go the way he wanted: what did he mean?

Rose Lyons, 46 Elton Drive. She agrees with the previous two speakers. If you have seen the space needs study you can see why Dave is confused. The Board of Education and Parks & Recreation asked for the most space. There is information not being made available to the Building Committee. She continues to hear the same discussions she has heard before. She re-capped the previous architect selection process. She would like to correct the previous minutes regarding statements she made. On the Master Plan for Parks and Recreation that was done in 2007 she didn't say that it would be ideal for a new Parks and Recreation building, only that certain sections of the plan were not shown to the Project Building Committee. On the grant for the Garfield Street relocation, the money started out for that and now it is for site planning. This Building Committee should talk to other Committees. She is disappointed to see Kaestle Boos Associates here tonight. She also thought the decision on an architect was a foregone conclusion when she walked in the room and saw them.

Iris Larsson, 41 Buckingham Street. She is a member of the Library Board. This Committee has been entrusted with a Building Project. The library services 31,000 patrons a month. She asked the Committee members to please visit the library and see the issues they are dealing with. She asked the Committee not to push the library aside.

Gail Budrejko, 21 Isabelle Terrace. With regards to the space needs, in the corporate environment it is not uncommon for instructions to be given to cut by a certain percentage. The Committee needs to be aggressive and to challenge people to think. Departments need to be challenged to defend their requirements. There are alternatives to traditional offices, such as offices with no walls. Departments really need to be challenged.

Louise Pomeroy, 214 Candlewyck Drive. She didn't see anything on the Town's website regarding the Committee and their meetings are not on TV. She had to go to the Town Clerk's Office to get an agenda for tonight's meeting.

Robert Larson, 817 Main Street. The Committee should address the budget early on in the design phase. This is normally based on a cost per square foot of construction or renovation. Currently it is about \$270/ square foot for renovation. This allows you to quickly find out the total cost. This is how most companies set up their budget. The Committee should be doing that in the next month or two.

- VIII. Response to Public Participation – On the question about replacing Committee members or the architect, the Chair can't replace members, but if the Committee doesn't think the architect is creative enough, the Building Committee could replace them. Regarding the statements that the presence of representatives of Kaestle Boos Associates signified that the Committee's

architect selection was a foregone conclusion, at the last meeting the Chair had asked if the Committee could enter into executive session to discuss this matter and was told it could not. The decision he reached on Kaestle Boos was for the reasons he stated earlier this evening and was not part of any prearranged agreement. Mr. Boos stated that, concerning costs, the forensic engineer is in house, but that the Town would still need to pay for any testing costs or for any consultant the Town would normally provide. Mr. Mortensen stated that he volunteered for the Project Building Committee because of what happened with the previous committee. The architect decision was not a foregone conclusion. He can't control what people will say, but rumors will doom this project and this committee. Those earlier statements are a bunch of baloney. He would hope that all members will serve on this Committee with an open mind and act on what they believe. He takes great exception to those comments. They insult every member of the Committee. Statements that it was a foregone conclusion are wrong and are very frustrating.

On not finding documents on the Town website, Mr. Baron stated that the documents are posted there, and if anyone needs assistance in finding them to please contact the Town Manager's Office. Regarding the comments on the budget, Mr. Bongiovanni stated that the Committee needs to know the number of square feet the Committee will need to have. The Committee doesn't know that yet. It hopes to determine that in a couple of months. Mr. Przech noted that in addition to standard corporate costs per square foot, the Town would also have costs for prevailing wages and Americans with Disabilities Act requirements to include as well. On the needs assessment, the Chair stated that the Committee can't go to every department head and conduct interviews. When it sees the study, if the Committee is not satisfied it will beat up the architect and then bring in the department head, if necessary. The Committee can't do everything everybody wants.

IX. Adjournment – the meeting adjourned at 8:12 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

*Jeff Baron*

Jeff Baron  
Director of Administrative Services